

Thursday, October 20, 2016



City approves bike, pedestrian issues, looks at crosswalks

BY Scott Unger Key West Citizen

Several bicycle and pedestrian transportation issues were approved by the Key West City Commission during its regular meeting Tuesday night at Old City Hall.

The board passed a resolution requesting the removal of unnecessary crosswalks on North Roosevelt Boulevard and the installation of High Intensity Activated Crosswalks (HAWK) signals at others.

The HAWK beacons feature multiple cues to emphasize the presence of pedestrians. When activated, the crosswalks display a red light that advances to a flashing indicator that allows motorists to proceed with caution once a pedestrian is clear, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

A HAWK crossing was recently installed in Key Largo at Mile Marker 99.7 and U.S. 1.

The use of red lights — as opposed to yellow — make HAWK crosswalks the safest option for pedestrians, according to Monroe County Sheriff Rick Ramsey.

“There’s no doubt if you’re going to have a crosswalk, it is the safest crosswalk to have,” Ramsey said. “Amber does not mean stop by state law, red means stop.”

A Florida Department of Transportation report on the crosswalks is expected in November, according to City Manager Jim Scholl.

The city is moving ahead with the bicycle and pedestrian master plan, with the board authorizing Scholl to negotiate a contract for the plan with one of four consulting firms. Toole Design Group, Alta Planning and Design, Calvin, Giordano and Associates and DRMP, Inc. applied for the project, with Toole Design Group rated highest by a selection group comprised of five city staff members and a private citizen.

The Florida Department of Transportation provided \$250,000 for the project through a Transportation Alternatives Program grant.

Another grant for \$28,852 from a partnership between FDOT and the University of South Florida was approved by the board to allow the Key West Police Department to conduct High Visibility Enforcement for bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The funds will be used for officer overtime hours spent conducting on-street enforcement operations through May 2017, according to FDOT.

The grant was available to the top-20 Florida counties with the greatest number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities, which includes Monroe County. The City of Key West ranked ninth in bike and pedestrian injury and fatal crashes, according to an FDOT study.

Advocacy group Last Stand supports the increased safety brought by the measures, said President Mark Songer.

“We have volunteered to do outreach and to use our social media to help the process to encourage more people to be using bicycles as a way to get around town,” Songer told the board. “We’re also looking forward to the safety improvements that the high visibility enforcement grant aid and the bicycle master plan will bring, so that everyone will feel good about riding a bicycle.”

The board also authorized city staff to apply for The Big Jump Project, which will provide funding up to \$750,000 over three years to 10 selected cities nationwide with the goal of doubling or tripling the number of people on bikes in those cities. The project is an initiative of the industry coalition and charitable foundation, People For Bikes.

sunger@keysnews.com



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WEATHER



Wides Swell, North gale,
Florida Elementary School

See forecast on Page 2A

FLORIDA

Demis unwilling to spend, aiding Rubio

Republican Sen. Marco Rubio is getting help from an unlikely quarter as he campaigns for re-election: the Democratic Party.

The party's Senate committee this week abandoned Rubio's Democratic rival, Rep. Patrick Murphy, jettisoning advertising off the capriciousness of the Senate's State and Foreign Relations Committee and sending the money to more positive races in smaller states where fundraising dollars go further.

The decision leaves Murphy, who raised only about one-third as much as Rubio to meet rivals, largely on his own. Page 3A

WORLD

US seizes lawyer for Gino testimony

A U.S. Navy Reserve lawyer who is also a Massachusetts state Senate candidate was taken into custody and jailed overnight after refusing a judge's order to testify in a case at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Stephen Gill was taken by the U.S. Marshals Service to the Washington area, where he testified Wednesday by videoconference in a pretrial hearing in the case of a Saudi national charged in the 2000 attack on the USS Cole. Page 3A

ON THE RADIO



Kathryn Williams and Al Crumey-Gage talk about their campaigns for Mosquito Control Board, District 1.

Also on today's show:
• **James Smith** — Marathon High School
• **Don Gertler** — small business
• **Don Herten** — State Rep. candidate
• **Dan Lee** — Key West Police Department
• **Virginia Paine** — Key West Chamber of Commerce
• **Rob Zuck** — Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority
• **Rob Girard** — Blue Paper

KNOX: 120, 8:30 a.m., noon, 5 & 6 p.m.
Evening Edition 5-6:30 p.m.

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County Commission nixes Habitat proposal

BY TIMOTHY O'HARA
Key West Citizen

The Monroe County Commission on Wednesday denied Habitat for Humanity's current proposal to stay in the Big Pine Key facility, but directed staff to continue working with the nonprofit group to come up with a solution that would allow them to stay.

Habitat for Humanity wants the three-story and office space are now located for a nominal fee or secure a long-term lease with Monroe County, possibly 40 years, despite county staff's report saying the facilities are no longer safe and the county should terminate its lease with Habitat.

"If there is a legitimate solution, someone bring it forward, because there hasn't been one at this time."

George Nugent
Monroe county commissioner

Attorneys for the Monroe County government have opined that the county can't just give or sell Habitat for Humanity the building and property on Big Pine Key that the nonprofit currently rents for a small fee.

In order to sell the building or lease it on a long-term basis, the county would have to advertise the sale and offer it to all interested parties, not just Habitat for Humanity. The commissioners said

See HABITAT, Page 7A

Former city commissioner's son arrested on DUI charges

BY ADAM LINHARDT
Key West Citizen

The son of a former city commissioner and former employee of the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority was arrested on suspicion of hit-and-run and multiple drunken driving charges Tuesday, according to Key West police.

Robert Livingston Bethel, 34, was charged with felony hit-and-run involving an injury, misdemeanor DUI, misdemeanor DUI with property damage, misdemeanor refusal to



Bethel

See DUI, Page 7A

HITTING THE ROAD(STERS)



Morgan Deane Group (MDG) members visit Key West this week during a South Florida tour of the British sports car that are no longer imported into the United States. Andy and Anne Lee of Holly Springs, North Carolina, own the 1965 red Morgan Plus 4, while Gary and Sally Kinsley of Dublin, Ohio, drive the blue 2005 roadster and Pat and Judy Buckley own the 2005 gray roadster.

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The HIWAK becomes feature multiple cues to emphasize the presence of pedestrians. When activated, the crosswalk displays a red light that advances to a flashing indicator that allows



CHUCK SCHMIDT/KEY CITIZEN

The High Intensity Activated Crosswalk — HIWAK, for short — at Mile Marker 96.7 in Key Largo became operational on Monday. Key West city officials are considering similar pedestrian walkways along North Rosemary Boulevard.

A HIWAK crossing was custom once a pedestrian is close, according to the Federal Highway Administration. See CROSSWALKS, Page 8A

Armed suicidal man in custody

BY ADAM LINHARDT
Key West Citizen

A suicidal man wanted in Tennessee barricaded himself in a house in Marathon on Tuesday and was taken into custody Wednesday morning after lengthy negotiations with law enforcement throughout the night.

Christopher Cox, 25, of Dickson, Tennessee, barricaded himself in the house at 400 50th St., here, at 6:45 p.m. after deputies arrived to serve an out-of-state warrant for violation of a court order regarding a theft case, according to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office.

He had a handgun and threatened to shoot himself several times throughout the night, reports say.

Hostage negotiators responded to the See ARMED, Page 8A

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CHRIS SEYMOUR/The Citizen

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See **CROSSWALKS**, Page 8A

Crosswalks

Continued from Page 1A

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The funds will be used



CHRIS SEYMOUR/The Citizen

Key West officials are considering modeling the North Roosevelt Boulevard pedestrian walkways after the newly installed crosswalk at Mile Marker 97.5 in Key Largo.

for officer overtime hours spent conducting on-street enforcement operations through May 2017, according to FDOT.

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